DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 215 171 CE 031 930

AUTHOR Sheppard, N. Alan
TITLE Equity from an Aging Specialist's Perspective. Research and Development Series No. 214O.
INSTITUTION Ohio State Univ., Columbus. National Center for Research in Vocational Education.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Vocational and Adult Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 81
CONTRACT 300-78-0032
NOTE 32p.; For related documents see CE 031 915-932.
AVAILABLE FROM The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, National Center Publications, Box F, 1960 Kenny Rd., Columbus, OH 43210 (RD214O, $2.35; set of 17 papers, RD214, $30.00; Equity in Vocational Education, RD213, $5.50. Quantity discounts available).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Vocational Education; Affirmative Action; *Age Discrimination; *Aging (Individuals); Aging Education; *Equal Opportunities (Jobs); Federal Legislation; *Older Adults; *Retirement; Vocational Education

ABSTRACT

As the incidence of older persons in American society grows, their participation in training and employment programs (including vocational education) will be of special importance. Although the elderly population has become increasingly "older," this group is retiring earlier. There will be a decrease in active workers supporting retired citizens whose income continues to be decimated by inflation. In addition, social security financing problems loom ahead. With the gradual reduction of the educational disadvantage of the elderly, the question will be whether these workers would take advantage of increased work options. A need exists for affirmative action for the aged. Barriers to equitable job training and placement are previous work history, lack of credentials, lack of access to job information, inadequate health status, attitudes and values of union and management decision makers, transportation, stereotypes, self-discrimination, employer discrimination, and job performance (employer fear of decreased productivity). Strategies for barrier elimination include federal age discrimination legislation, federal support programs, advocacy groups, adjustments in personnel policy, and training of vocational educators and public to promote a better understanding of aging. (An action plan for vocational education and general recommendations are provided.) (YLB)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED215171

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR RESEARCH IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

CE031930

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Linda Pfister

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Research and Development Series No. 214O

# EQUITY FROM AN AGING SPECIALIST'S PERSPECTIVE

by
N. Alan Sheppard

**SUMMARY** Vocational educators have grappled with equity as a problem and have espoused it as a cause since 1963 when Congress issued both an equity mandate and an equity challenge with the passage of the Vocational Education Act. This paper is one of seventeen reports commissioned by the National Center for Research in Vocational Education to meet the equity challenge through a multidisciplinary approach encompassing three perspectives—academic, vocational education, and special interest group advocacy.

The following paper begins with a comprehensive assessment of demographic trends and their impact upon vocational education and employment opportunities for older adults. The author then describes specific equity problems by using an affirmative action continuum model for discussing barriers to equitable job training and placement. Then, taking the positive approach that the identified barriers can be overcome, the author discusses strategies for their elimination under six general headings: federal legislation; federal support programs; advocacy groups; adjustments in personnel policies; educational strategies; and the training of vocational educators and the public to promote a better understanding of aging.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the incidence of older persons in the American society and the extent to which their participation in the social and economic life of this nation are affected by their age. Of special importance is their participation in training and employment programs, including vocational education.

In this paper, the term older adults (used also interchangeably with "older Americans," "older persons," "aged," "elderly," and "seniors") refers to persons sixty years of age and older. In some government reports and in media coverage, people forty-five and above are often referred to as "older adults." Demographers, economists, scientists, and others group older adults from ages fifty-five, sixty, sixty-five, and up. There are also the "young old"—those approximately sixty through seventy-five years of age, and the "very

old"—those persons seventy-five years old or more. In short there is no precise way to define "older adults". However, for the purposes of this activity the sixty plus population group will constitute the operational definition of being an older American.

## EMERGING DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND THEIR IMPACT ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER ADULTS

### The Coming "Senior Boom"

The elderly population increased in size from 4.9 million in 1900 to nearly seven times this number in 1977 (32.8 million), while the population under sixty years of age increased at only one-fourth this rate (see Table I). Current U.S. Census Bureau projections indicate that the elderly will continue to grow at a faster pace than the rest of the population into the twenty-first century. The growth rate for the elderly population will slow somewhat about the turn of the century as the relatively younger cohorts who were born during the Depression of the 1930s reach the age of seventy. However, as persons born during the "baby boom" years reach the age


## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*NATHANIEL ALAN SHEPPARD is an Associate Professor in the College of Education of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University where he also coordinates the advanced degree program in vocational and technical education at the Dulles campus in Northern Virginia. From 1977-1980, he served as staff director of the Federal Council on the Aging and as special assistant to the president's counselor on aging in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Although his background is in the areas of vocational, technical, and agricultural education, he is particularly interested in gerontology as evidenced by his position in Washington, D.C. He received a bachelor's degree in agricultural education from the Fort Valley State College and completed his master's and doctoral degrees in vocational-technical education at the University of Illinois and The Ohio State University respectively. He has been a consultant to numerous state and federal agencies as well as colleges and universities. He is a member of fourteen professional associations and organizations. The number of papers he has presented and the list of addresses and workshop presentations he has been invited to give are as impressive as his lengthy list of publications. Among his many professional honors and awards, he received the Professional Achievement and Community Service award from The Ohio State University in 1979, and in 1980 was the recipient of the Who's Who in American Vocational Education Recognition Certificate.*

## TABLE 1

## NUMBER OF PERSONS OF ALL AGES AND 60+ YEARS OLD BY AGE FOR 1900 AND PROJECTIONS FOR THE YEARS 1977, 2000, AND 2035

| Subject | All Ages | 60+ | | 65+ | | 75+ | 85+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Total | 60-64 | Total | 65-74 | | |
| **NUMBER (in thousands)** | | | | | | | |
| **Total–** | | | | | | | |
| 1900 | 76,212 | 4,279 | 1,795 | 3,084 | 2,189 | 895 | 122 |
| 1977 | 216,745 | 32,793 | 9,362 | 23,431 | 14,577 | 8,853 | 2,040 |
| 2000 | 260,378 | 41,973 | 10,151 | 31,822 | 17,436 | 14,386 | 3,756 |
| 2035 | 304,486 | 70,514 | 14,709 | 55,805 | 29,627 | 26,178 | 6,854 |
| **Female–** | | | | | | | |
| 1900 | 37,243 | 2,401 | 875 | 1,526 | 1,070 | 456 | 68 |
| 1977 | 111,071 | 18,868 | 4,983 | 13,885 | 8,251 | 5,634 | 1,394 |
| 2000 | 133,790 | 24,451 | 5,346 | 19,105 | 9,762 | 9,341 | 2,693 |
| 2035 | 158,184 | 41,086 | 7,716 | 33,370 | 16,519 | 16,851 | 4,913 |
| **Races Other Than White–** | | | | | | | |
| 1900 | 9,344 | 448 | 172 | 276 | 185 | 91 | (NA) |
| 1977 | 29,009 | 3,048 | 881 | 2,167 | 1,420 | 747 | 195 |
| 2000 | 41,464 | 4,991 | 1,324 | 3,667 | 2,216 | 1,450 | 392 |
| 2035 | 57,509 | 12,275 | 2,888 | 9,387 | 5,344 | 4,043 | 1,049 |
| **PERCENT CHANGE FOR SELECTED PERIODS** | | | | | | | |
| **Total–** | | | | | | | |
| 1900 to 1977 | 184.4 | 572.1 | 421.6 | 659.8 | 565.9 | 889.2 | 1,572.1 |
| 1977 to 2000 | 20.1 | 28.0 | 8.4 | 35.8 | 19.6 | 62.5 | 84.1 |
| 2000 to 2035 | 16.9 | 68.0 | 44.9 | 75.4 | 69.9 | 82.0 | 82.5 |
| 1977 to 2035 | 40.5 | 115.0 | 57.1 | 138.2 | 103.2 | 195.7 | 236.0 |
| **Female–** | | | | | | | |
| 1900 to 1977 | 198.2 | 685.8 | 469.5 | 809.9 | 671.1 | 1,135.5 | 1,950.0 |
| 1977 to 2000 | 20.5 | 29.6 | 7.3 | 37.6 | 18.3 | 65.8 | 93.2 |
| 2000 to 2035 | 18.2 | 68.0 | 44.3 | 74.7 | 69.2 | 80.4 | 82.4 |
| 1977 to 2035 | 42.4 | 117.8 | 54.8 | 140.3 | 100.2 | 199.1 | 252.4 |
| **Races Other Than White–** | | | | | | | |
| 1900 to 1977 | 210.5 | 580.4 | 412.2 | 685.1 | 667.6 | 720.9 | (NA) |
| 1977 to 2000 | 42.9 | 63.7 | 50.3 | 69.2 | 56.1 | 94.1 | 101.0 |
| 2000 to 2035 | 38.7 | 145.9 | 118.1 | 156.0 | 141.2 | 178.8 | 167.6 |
| 1977 to 2035 | 98.2 | 302.7 | 227.8 | 333.2 | 276.3 | 441.2 | 437.9 |

(NA) = not available

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, various publications, and unpublished data.

of seventy early in the next century, most of the growth in the nation's population will occur in the older age brackets. Between 1977 and 2035, the total population is projected to grow by about 40 percent from 217 million to 304 million persons. The elderly population is projected to more than double in size during this same period,from 33 to 71 million persons.

**Increased Longevity**

As a result of these demographic changes, the average age of our population has risen from twenty-three years to over twenty-nine years since 1900, and is projected to climb to thirty-eight years by the year 2035. At the beginning of this century, persons sixty years old and over represented one of every sixteen persons. They now represent one of every seven and, by the year 2035, will represent about one-fourth of the total population (see Table 2). Among the population twenty-five years old and over, the elderly now represent one-fourth of this age group and will represent over one-third by the year 2035. Today, life expectancy is sixty-nine for men and seventy-seven for women.

Beyond the sheer growth in the numbers of the elderly, the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of this population have also undergone considerable change in the past and will continue to change dramatically in the future. For example, the elderly population has become increasingly "older." While the size of the population sixty and over has increased by nearly seven times since 1900, the population seventy-five and over has experienced a ten-fold increase and the eighty-five plus age group has grown by about seventeen times.

Currently, about one-fourth of the elderly population is seventy-five and over, and this proportion is projected to increase to over one-third by the year 2035. The eighty-five plus group now constitutes one of every sixteen elderly persons; by 2035, they will represent one of every ten. These increases in the older age groups will add about three years to the median age of the sixty plus population, from sixty-four years in 1977 to seventy-two years in 2035.

**Earlier Retirement**

Ironically, although people are living longer, they are retiring earlier. Thirty years ago, of the nearly one-half of all people sixty-five and over, only one man in

## TABLE 2

## PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF PERSONS OF ALL AGES AND 60+ YEARS OLD BY AGE FOR 1900 AND PROJECTIONS FOR THE YEARS 1977, 2000, AND 2035

| Subject | All Ages | 60+ | | 65+ | | 75+ | 85+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Total | 60-64 | Total | 65-74 | | |
| **ALL AGES:** | | | | | | | |
| Total– | | | | | | | |
| 1900 | 100.0 | 6.4 | 2.4 | 4.0 | 2.9 | 1.2 | 0.2 |
| 1977 | 100.0 | 15.1 | 4.3 | 10.8 | 6.7 | 4.1 | 0.9 |
| 2000 | 100.0 | 16.1 | 3.9 | 12.2 | 6.7 | 5.5 | 1.4 |
| 2035 | 100.0 | 23.2 | 4.8 | 18.3 | 9.7 | 8.6 | 2.3 |
| Female– | | | | | | | |
| 1900 | 100.0 | 6.4 | 2.3 | 4.1 | 2.9 | 1.2 | 0.2 |
| 1977 | 100.0 | 17.0 | 4.5 | 12.5 | 7.4 | 5.1 | 1.3 |
| 2000 | 100.0 | 18.3 | 4.0 | 14.3 | 7.3 | 7.0 | 2.0 |
| 2035 | 100.0 | 26.0 | 4.9 | 21.1 | 10.4 | 10.7 | 3.1 |
| Races Other Than White– | | | | | | | |
| 1900 | 100.0 | 4.8 | 1.8 | 3.0 | 2.0 | 1.0 | (NA) |
| 1977 | 100.0 | 10.5 | 3.0 | 7.5 | 4.9 | 2.6 | 0.7 |
| 2000 | 100.0 | 12.0 | 3.2 | 8.8 | 5.2 | 3.5 | 0.9 |
| 2035 | 100.0 | 21.3 | 5.0 | 16.3 | 9.3 | 7.0 | 1.8 |
| **60+ YEARS OLD:** | | | | | | | |
| Total– | | | | | | | |
| 1900 | (X) | 100.0 | 36.8 | 63.2 | 44.9 | 18.3 | 2.5 |
| 1977 | (X) | 100.0 | 28.5 | 71.5 | 44.5 | 27.0 | 6.2 |
| 2000 | (X) | 100.0 | 24.2 | 75.8 | 41.5 | 34.3 | 8.9 |
| 2035 | (X) | 100.0 | 20.9 | 79.1 | 42.0 | 37.1 | 9.7 |
| Female– | | | | | | | |
| 1900 | (X) | 100.0 | 36.4 | 63.6 | 44.6 | 19.0 | 2.8 |
| 1977 | (X) | 100.0 | 26.4 | 73.6 | 43.7 | 29.9 | 7.4 |
| 2000 | (X) | 100.0 | 21.9 | 78.1 | 39.9 | 38.2 | 11.0 |
| 2035 | (X) | 100.0 | 18.8 | 81.2 | 40.2 | 41.0 | 12.0 |
| Races Other Than White– | | | | | | | |
| 1900 | (X) | 100.0 | 38.4 | 61.6 | 41.3 | 20.3 | (NA) |
| 1977 | (X) | 100.0 | 28.9 | 71.1 | 46.6 | 24.5 | 6.4 |
| 2000 | (X) | 100.0 | 26.5 | 73.5 | 44.4 | 29.1 | 7.9 |
| 2035 | (X) | 100.0 | 23.5 | 76.5 | 43.5 | 32.9 | 8.5 |

(NA) = not available
(X) = not applicable
SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, various publications, and unpublished data.

five and only one woman in twelve were in the work force. There is no real indication that this trend to earlier retirement will cease, even given the changes taking place in mandatory retirement. Thus we are confronted with some serious questions concerning not only the cost of providing retirement income, but the quality of life for many citizens who may spend twenty years or even longer in retirement.

### Decrease in Active Workers

The ratio of active workers to retired citizens will change dramatically over the future—from six-to-one today, to only three-to-one in 2030. This ratio is important because it suggests how many active workers are available to support programs for the elderly. We can estimate this ratio by comparing the numer of citizens sixty-five and over to those twenty to sixty-four. This is rather crude, since some persons over sixty-four are not retired and many people age twenty to sixty-four are not workers; but the historical changes in this ratio are nonetheless extraordinary. In 1940, there were nine citizens aged twenty to sixty-four for every citizen sixty-five or over; today the ratio is six-to-one; by 2030 it will be only three-to-one.

### Inflation

The combination of greater longevity and earlier retirement adds considerably to the length of retired life for many, during which retirement income continues to be decimated by inflation, and more assets are used up trying to survive. In short, inflation, which lowers purchasing power, is forcing many older adults and especially retireees to seek job opportunities to earn additional income as an alternative to living on welfare or asking for handouts.

### Social Security Financing Problems

In earlier demographic assumptions about social security financing, the projected substantial buildup in the 1960s and 1970s was thought to be very sound. In 1977, however, the system faced a major funding crisis—namely, a significant drop in contribution during the 1974-75 recession and the projected drain on the trust fund reserves. As a consequence, Congress enacted and the president signed into law substantial social security tax increases.

## Increasing Levels of Education

A low level of education has often been singled out as a major factor inhibiting the older adult's second career opportunity or further involvement in the labor force. Statistics from 1973 show that 15 percent of older Americans are functionally illiterate, and the average urban dweller over age sixty-five has had only eight years of formal education (Butler 1973).

Age bias in training and education programs holds many older adults in their disadvantaged position by denying them opportunities to enhance their qualifications. Very few employers are willing to invest in training for older adults (often despite good work records), and many colleges and universities still appear to have age limits on the awarding of degrees. These biases are often the result of the erroneous belief that learning ability decreases with age (Bauer 1979). Studies have shown that between the ages of twenty and sixty-five there is little, if any change in the ability to retain new information and learn new skills (Sheppard and Rix 1977).

In general, the more advanced the individual's age, the less formal education has been experienced. The median number of years of school completed by persons sixty plus in 1979 was 10.8 years. This means that more than half of today's sixty plus population did not graduate from high school.

Table 3 shows a breakdown of the number of years of school completed by the sixty plus population according to sex and race.

At least half the persons in the sixty plus population must be viewed as somewhat undereducated, and nearly 21 percent are categorized as functionally illiterate. This statistic is even more alarming in examining the incidence of illiteracy between whites and nonwhites. Table 3 shows that 17.3 percent of whites completed less than eight years of schooling in comparison to 51.9 percent and 60.2 percent of the sixty plus year old black and Spanish-surnamed populations, respectively. Not to be misleading—it should be pointed out that the older population's educational level has been changing in recent years. In 1966, the median years of schooling for employed men between the ages of fifty-five to sixty-four was only 77.7 percent of that of men twenty-five through thirty-four. In 1976, however, the percentage had risen to 94.6, indicating that the overall educational discrepancy between younger and older workers had become negligible. For women, the change from 1966 to 1976

## TABLE 3

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF PERSONS 60+ YEARS OLD, BY RACE, SPANISH ORIGIN, AND SEX: MARCH 1979

(Data exclude persons in institutions)

| | All Races | | | White | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Years of School Completed | Both Sexes | Male | Female | Both Sexes | Male | Female |
| Number (thousands) | 32,595 | 13,950 | 18,645 | 29,475 | 12,594 | 16,881 |
| Percent | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| None | 2.1 | 1.4 | 1.8 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 1.4 |
| Elementary: | | | | | | |
| 1-4 years | 5.7 | 6.5 | 5.1 | 4.1 | 4.7 | 3.7 |
| 5-7 years | 12.7 | 13.4 | 12.2 | 11.7 | 12.4 | 11.1 |
| 5 years | 3.0 | 3.2 | 2.9 | 2.5 | 2.6 | 2.5 |
| 6-7 years | 9.7 | 10.3 | 9.3 | 9.2 | 9.9 | 8.7 |
| 8 years | 18.8 | 18.7 | 18.9 | 19.5 | 19.6 | 19.5 |
| High School: | | | | | | |
| 1-3 years | 16.1 | 15.6 | 16.6 | 16.2 | 15.9 | 16.4 |
| 1 year | 5.5 | 5.2 | 5.7 | 5.5 | 5.2 | 5.7 |
| 2 years | 6.6 | 6.4 | 6.8 | 6.8 | 6.7 | 6.8 |
| 3 years | 4.0 | 3.9 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 4.0 |
| 4 years | 26.8 | 24.1 | 28.8 | 28.2 | 25.4 | 30.3 |
| College: | | | | | | |
| 1-3 years | 8.8 | 8.9 | 8.7 | 9.3 | 9.4 | 9.2 |
| 1 year | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 3.2 |
| 2 years | 4.2 | 4.3 | 4.1 | 4.4 | 4.5 | 4.3 |
| 3 years | 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 1.6 | 1.8 |
| 4 years | 9.0 | 10.4 | 7.9 | 9.5 | 11.0 | 8.4 |
| 5 years | 5.4 | 6.0 | 5.0 | 5.8 | 6.4 | 5.3 |
| 5+ years | 3.6 | 4.4 | 2.9 | 3.7 | 4.6 | 3.1 |
| Median (in years) | 10.8 | 10.6 | 10.9 | 11.2 | 11.0 | 11.5 |
| Selected Summaries: | | | | | | |
| % less than 8 years | 20.5 | 22.4 | 19.1 | 17.3 | 18.8 | 16.2 |
| % not a high school graduate | 55.5 | 56.7 | 54.6 | 53.0 | 54.3 | 52.1 |
| % high school graduates | 44.5 | 43.3 | 45.4 | 47.0 | 45.7 | 47.9 |
| % with 1+ years of college | 17.7 | 19.2 | 16.6 | 18.8 | 20.4 | 17.6 |
| % with 4+ years of college | 9.0 | 10.4 | 7.9 | 9.5 | 11.0 | 8.4 |

| Black | | | Spanish Origin[1] | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Both Sexes | Male | Female | Both Sexes | Male | Female |
| 2,758 | 1.170 | 1,587 | 771 | 350 | 420 |
| 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| 6.6 | 9.2 | 4.6 | 16.6 | 15.7 | 17.6 |
| 22.0 | 25.4 | 19.5 | 22.0 | 22.9 | 20.7 |
| 23.4 | 24.0 | 22.9 | 21.5 | 21.1 | 21.9 |
| 7.7 | 8.5 | 7.1 | 6.4 | 6.0 | 6.7 |
| 15.7 | 15.6 | 15.8 | 15.2 | 15.1 | 15.2 |
| 12.8 | 10.7 | 14.3 | 11.5 | 11.1 | 11.9 |
| 15.8 | 12.7 | 18.0 | 8.8 | 9.1 | 8.1 |
| 5.8 | 5.0 | 6.5 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 2.4 |
| 5.7 | 4.3 | 6.7 | 3.8 | 3.7 | 3.6 |
| 4.2 | 3.5 | 4.7 | 2.7 | 3.1 | 2.1 |
| 13.1 | 12.2 | 13.7 | 11.4 | 10.9 | 11.9 |
| 3.4 | 2.8 | 3.9 | 3.6 | 4.0 | 3.6 |
| 1.1 | 0.7 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 2.6 | 0.7 |
| 2.0 | 1.8 | 2.3 | 1.8 | 1.1 | 2.4 |
| 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.5 |
| 3.1 | 2.9 | 3.3 | 4.4 | 5.4 | 4.0 |
| 1.2 | 0.9 | 1.5 | 3.1 | 3.4 | 3.1 |
| 1.9 | 2.0 | 1.8 | 1.3 | 2.0 | 1.0 |
| 7.8 | 6.9 | 8.2 | 6.7 | 6.7 | 6.7 |
| 51.9 | 58.6 | 47.0 | 60.2 | 59.7 | 60.2 |
| 80.4 | 82.1 | 79.3 | 80.5 | 80.0 | 80.2 |
| 19.5 | 17.9 | 20.9 | 19.5 | 20.3 | 19.5 |
| 6.5 | 5.7 | 7.2 | 8.0 | 9.4 | 7.6 |
| 3.1 | 2.9 | 3.3 | 4.4 | 5.4 | 4.0 |

[1] Persons of Spanish origin may be of any race. Over 90% of persons of Spanish origin classified themselves as white in the 1970 census.

Note: Percents may not add to total because of rounding

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports,* Series P-20, No. 356, "Educational Attainment in the United States: March 1979 and 1978," table 1 (forthcoming).

was slight. In 1966 a woman's median years of schooling were already quite high, 11.6, as opposed to 9.7 for men (Sheppard and Rix 1977). Table 3 reveals that median years of schooling completed (1979) were 10.6 and 10.9 years for males and females, respectively. The point to be made from these statistical facts is that with the gradual reduction of the educational disadvantage of the elderly as a group, though in recognition of the educational deprivation of the vast majority of the sixty plus ethnic minority population, lack of education is no excuse for wanton and blatant denial of career opportunities for older adults. Would substantial numbers of older adults, however, actually take advantage of increased work options if opportunities were available?

The Harris survey (1975) offered some interesting clues on the work interest of Americans sixty-five and over. The survey showed that of the 21 million Americans aged sixty-five and older (at that time)—

- 2.8 million were working;
- 4 million (three out of ten of this age group) who were not working said that they wanted to work;
- 4.5 million were working as volunteers; and
- another 2.1 million who were not working said that they were interested in volunteer service.

A more recent Harris study (1979) found—

- 51 percent of the employees surveyed want to continue working in some capacity rather than retire;
- 48 percent in the age group fifty to sixty-four wish to continue working after age sixty-five;
- 46 percent of those already retired would prefer to be working; and
- 53 percent of those retired wish they had never done so.

Perhaps, as discussed in the Report of the National Committee on Careers for Older Americans (1979), the answer to whether older adults would really respond to work opportunities depends on whether meaningful work options are present, or absent, or limited for elderly persons.

## THE NEED FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION OR SPECIFIC EQUITY PROBLEMS

The participation of older adults in significant ways in our society, such as in education, politics, and policymaking, has been limited but appears to be increasing at an enormous rate thanks to the passage of key legislation addressing the needs of older adults (e.g., the Older Americans Act Amendments of 1978 and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 as amended), the emergence of national aging organizations, and the formation of advocacy groups among the elderly. To be sure, problems of the participation of older adults in the many aspects of society, among them vocational education, still persist and need to be confronted head-on.

To confront the problem of discrimination, for example, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 directed the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights to conduct a study of unreasonable discrimination on the basis of age in the administration of programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. Ten federal programs were studied, including the State Vocational Education Basic Grant Program. Discrimination on the basis of age was found to exist in each of the programs examined. Prominent among them were vocational education and CETA programs.

In the past fifteen years and especially after the appearance of the Older Americans Act of 1965 as amended, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, 1967, and the Age Discrimination Act Amendments of 1978, much has been written about equity for the elderly. Some of the more controversial aspects of equity have been widely debated, and the career achievements of those individuals beyond sixty or sixty-five have been highlighted in both the popular and the professional press. All of this attention suggests change in both attitudes toward older people as well as in the availability of employment, volunteer, or self-help opportunities for them.

Ageism, a term coined in 1968 by Dr. Robert N. Butler (Director of the National Institute on Aging), sets the tone for strong affirmative action measures. According to Butler, ageism "can be seen as systematic stereotyping of and discrimination

against people because they are old, just as racism and sexism accomplish this through skin color and gender—ageism allows the younger generation to see older people as different from themselves. Thus they can subtly cease to identify with their elders as human beings."

### Minimal Compliance and Equity

Certain assumptions about equity within the context of both the total society and vocational education are part of the basis for the development of this product. From the writer's perspective, affirmative action occurs along a continuum which begins with minimal compliance. This is sometimes the total substance of affirmative action programs (Robinson 1978). Minimal compliance means any activities undertaken to meet guidelines for human rights legislation. Minimal compliance is not seen here as representing affirmative action. Minimal compliance involves merely removing those barriers which could legally represent intent to discriminate (Robinson 1980).

Affirmative action is defined here as action taken to move beyond minimal compliance toward equity. As defined here, affirmative action does not occur until the focus of evaluation is shifted from intent to effect, from minimizing illegal activities to maximizing opportunities for persons traditionally excluded from full participation in our society. The effect of this kind of affirmative action will be equity. Gappa's (1977) definition of equity in postsecondary education seems appropriate for the terminal point of the affirmative action continuum:

> The fair and just treatment of all members of society who wish to participate in and enjoy the benefits of postsecondary education (p. 8).

To achieve this definition, leaders in education must move beyond current concepts of affirmative action. Assistance is needed to make the shift from minimal compliance toward equity, which means the full participation of older Americans in all aspects of society, including vocational education.

## BARRIERS TO EQUITABLE JOB TRAINING AND PLACEMENT

There are several specific barriers that may prevent older persons from securing satisfactory training and placement, and vocational education and supportive training programs must recognize and understand how to cope with these barriers in order to deliver maximum service to older persons. As listed and discussed in the report by the Office of Manpower Planning (Special Study 1977), employment and training-related barriers may consist of a number of considerations.

- *Previous Work History* Some older workers, particularly women who are entering the labor force for the first time, may not have a previous work history; their total life experiences may consist of the day-to-day administration of living. Others may have a history of a very specific and limiting kind of work, which, in their older years, they may not be interested in continuing, or which, because of physical, economic, or other conditions, they may not be able to continue.

- *Lack of Credentials* If workers have no previous work history, or if they are trying to make a change from a very specific kind of work, their credentials may not provide evidence that success in a new type of work is possible. Manpower services can help individuals attain the required education and training level, and can provide on-the-job training and work experience assignments as an aid in building a background that will be attractive to an employer.

- *Lack of Access to Job Information* It is common for older persons not to know where the jobs are, how to interpret job requirements and training opportunities, how to present themselves and their life experiences with efficacy, or even how to take part in the personnel selection system of a particular organization. Lack of understanding of these processes can contribute to increased discouragement, which then becomes a further barrier to the employment of older workers. Support services must be made available to teach them how to deal with these processes in the most advantageous manner.

- *Inadequate Health Status* Many older workers, particularly the disadvantaged, have health problems or conditions that must be evaluated and controlled before employment is possible. Furthermore, many employers have rigid

health regulations which initially screen out infirm applicants. Support services must determine whether or not health conditions of applicants are reasonably manageable, and whether or not correction of the problem will lead to employability. If there is reason to expect that the worker will be employable when the conditions are under control, then support services can justify proper assistance to correct the health problem. Finally, the older worker can then demonstrate to the employer that the condition is controlled and does not restrict work activity.

- *Attitudes and Values of Union and Management Decision Makers* Successful placement of an older worker depends in large part upon a positive attitude on the part of the employer. The greatest selling point is the success of other placements with which the employer can identify. If training and placement services have enabled workers to develop to a point where they can function effectively in a job, they become an example for other workers to follow and lend credence to the efficacy of the program.

- *Transportation Barriers* For many older persons, transportation may mean the difference between remaining inactive and unemployed, and being placed in a job. Securing transportation for an employment search, visits to the doctor, or training classes may present a major problem that they cannot solve for themselves. Reduced bus and taxi fares, along with other community transportation services have aided many older persons in taking care of their needs. Support services in the employment program must also consider these needs so that the older worker who does secure employment may have a way to get to the eventual job.

- *Stereotypes* Stereotypes may develop in reaction to the age of the older workers, their ethnicity, or previous work history. In developing jobs and placement opportunities, training and placement programs must work to prevent this type of discrimination by providing the kind of orientation for the employers that can help to overcome such attitudes and presumptions on their part. Again, the example of successful placements can help the effort.

- *Self-Discrimination* The attitudes of workers themselves may, through conditioning of one kind or another, be negative. They may have a poor work self-image and may not consider themselves of value. It is the task of the training programs to modify these attitudes so that workers can make use of their potential and have confidence in their ability to perform on the job. This can be

accomplished through a positive reorientation to the world of work and through a realistic approach to understanding and mastering work requirements.

Aside from these barriers identified by the Department of Labor, two others which severely restrict older persons' entry and success in training and job placement are *employer discrimination and job performance.*

**Employer Discrimination**

Employment opportunities are often unavailable to older people because of age discrimination and negative employer attitudes toward older workers. These attitudes, coupled with discrimination, create a real impediment to employment for many competent, valuable workers (Bauer 1979). In the NCOA/Harris survey, four-fifths of a total public sample agreed either "strongly" or "somewhat" with the statement that "most employers discriminate against older people and make it difficult for them to find jobs." In that same survey, an overwhelming majority (87 percent) of the employed respondents who claimed personal responsbility for the hiring and firing of other employees agreed that employers discriminate against older applicants (Meier 1976). In fact, during fiscal year 1976, the U.S. Department of Labor located 13,000 men and women who had been fired, denied jobs, or otherwise illegally discriminated against because of their age (Brown 1977). There is little doubt that age stereotypes work against the older worker in management decisions regarding training and development, career opportunities, and retirement. Management training programs, created by specialists in the field, can help to change these negative attitudes.

There is also considerable misinformation regarding the consequences of hiring and retaining older workers. Two common misconceptions are that such practices would deprive a large number of young people of work and that a higher proportion of older workers would increase labor costs. Many employers mistakenly believe that to hire and retrain older workers is in conflict with affirmative action programs. A concerted effort to merge older workers' placement objectives with the objectives of affirmative action programs should help clarify this issue. Inasmuch as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission took on responsibility for enforcing the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) in 1979, the impetus for such programs most logically lies with this agency.

## Job Performance

Turning to job performance, we find that employers' fear of the increased *possibility* of older workers' physical limitations, rather than the *actuality* of such limitations, acts as a deterrent to the employment of competent older workers. When asked to assess their own ability to contribute to the community, however, 40 percent of persons sixty-five and older saw themselves as "very useful" and 39 percent saw themselves as "somewhat useful." Research indicates that the decrease in physical ability associated with age generally has no significant effect on job performance. In a study by Richard Arvey and Stephan Mussio involving test discrimination, job performance, and age, correlations were made between a combination cognitive clerical test battery and performance ratings of 266 civil service clerical workers. The findings disclosed that if used without reference to age, parts of the battery would discriminate against younger workers, and other parts against older workers. Most importantly, they found that in supervisors' ratings of employees' overall job performance "no difference between the two groups was observed in the measure of job performance" (Arvey and Mussio 1973).

In fact, the idea of a major decline in productivity with age has been disproven consistently by experimental and survey data, showing older workers to be as productive as their younger counterparts, or only slightly less so (Schwab and Heneman 1977). Specific areas of physical and mental change and the nature of those changes are factors unique to the maturation of the individual. In addition, the significance of the change relative to job performance is dependent on the specific demands of each person's job. Therefore, it is more useful to employers to identify workers by ability than by a generally irrelevant characteristic such as age.

There remains a potpourri of other, perhaps lesser known, barriers that discourage older persons from seeking employment. For example, some elderly persons in the preretirement age group have begun to devote their interest to retirement, a fact that can be a barrier to training and placement. These particular older persons are not as enthusiastic about working as one might expect, and such behavior is recognized by trainers, counselors, placement specialists, and most important, employers. Also, older workers who become social security recipients, either after becoming survivors or reaching age sixty-two are often discouraged from continuing work because of income penalties. In the case of the disadvantaged, this is particularly paradoxical (Special Study 1977).

With respect to barriers confronting the elderly via their participation in vocational education, the major obstacle is an attitudinal one. Sheppard (1975) in a statewide survey of a random group of vocational educators found that the primary barrier to serving older people is accepting the idea that older people can be served in vocational education; that vocational education has a special and unique role to play in creating greater equity for older Americans.

Without a doubt, vocational education programs have not been specifically designed for older adults. Consequently, participation rates are practically nonexistent. Although many adult education courses in vocational-technical education are generally open to older persons, elderly people do not take advantage of them to any great extent.

## STRATEGIES FOR AND SOLUTIONS TO ELIMINATING BARRIERS AND CREATING A CLIMATE FOR EQUITY

Though the barriers which restrict many elderly persons from participating in many aspects of society and vocational education will not be removed overnight, they are removable. They are not indestructible, and something can be done to create a climate of equity.

The following strategies appear to offer the best potential for ensuring a climate of equity for older Americans.

### Impact of Age Discrimination Legislation

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) Amendments of 1978 virtually eliminated chronological age as the sole criterion for continued employment. Specifically, the ADEA Amendments of 1978 (P.L. 95-256) ended mandatory retirement in federal employment, except for a few classes of positions, and made it unlawful in nonfederal employment to force the retirement of a worker before 70 on the basis of age.

Prior to the passage of the ADEA Amendments of 1978, the Congress concluded that there was no significant evidence to prove that the Amendments would seriously jeoparadize employment opportunities for younger workers and that in any case the employment opportunities for older workers should receive equal protection.

The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 as amended in 1978 is also relevant to this discussion. The Act states:

> . . .No person in the United States shall, on the basis of age be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. (Older Americans Act of 1978, p. 88)

Federal financial assistance includes programs or activities receiving funds under the State and Local Fiscal Assistance Act of 1972 (31 U.S.C. 1221 et. seq.).

It is important for vocational educators to recognize the *rights* of individuals to training and job opportunities and services under federal support *without regard to age*. This in turn will encourage more older adults to stay in active employment or to pursue different career options.

### Impact of Federally Supported Programs

Two examples of federal programs in this category include: (a) Title V—Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) of the Older Americans Act (OAA) Amendments of 1978; and (b) The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973.

### The Senior Community Employment Training Act of 1973

Now Title V of the Older Americans Act Amendments of 1978 (formerly Title IX of the 1973 Amendments), SCSEP is the major categorical older workers' program. With the passage of the Older Americans Service Amendments of 1973 to the Older Americans Act, the SCSEP demonstration program was incorporated as a permanent community service employment project under Title IX of that Act. During 1974, the SCSEP was funded by both CETA Title III and OAA funds. However, in the latter part of 1975. the SCSEP was funded exclusively through OAA Title IX funds, and the Operation Mainstream Program (CETA Title III funds) was subsequently eliminated as an older worker program. During that year, the congressional appropriations committee responsible for the OAA also added statutory language directing 20 percent of the funds appropriated to be managed by states, with the remaining 80 percent to be managed by national sponsors.

In 1978, the SCSEP was amended, and the ratio of funds provided a greater role for the states that were designated to receive 55 percent of any additional appropriation after funds were made available to continue national sponsors at their 1978 operating level. The FY 1980 allocation for this program is $267 million, supporting 52,250 job slots. The program remains in existence under Title V of the amended Older Americans Act as the Senior Community Service Employment Program.

There has been no change in enrollment criteria requiring that program participants meet poverty income requirements and be fifty-five years of age or over. There has been a gradual reemphasis of the importance of job training programs, with selective training offered to facilitate placement in unsubsidized employment opportunities in the host agency, the private, or the public sector. Primary emphasis is placed on support mechanisms which expand the older workers' confidence, update old skills, or develop new ones; and training in job-seeking methods is offered to encourage placement in unsubsidized jobs. Learning new skills is assumed to be part of the job experience. The program is an extremely popular one, and even though legislated by the OAA, is viewed as the U.S. Department of Labor's one firm "claim to fame" where older worker programs are concerned (Bauer 1979).

**CETA - Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973**

CETA has been consistently criticized by senior citizen advocates for offering so little help to older workers in contrast to their needs. Congress was told in 1975 that those over 55 were:

- 19.7 percent of the labor force,
- 23 percent of the low-income population,
- 30 percent of all heads of households, and
- 11 percent of the recorded unemployed.

In spite of this, those over fifty-five were only about 2 percent of CETA participants in 1976 and 4.1 percent in 1977.

Under CETA Title III, the secretary of the Labor Department's discretionary funds are to be targeted to special groups of "labor market disadvantaged" unemployed, including older workers. But the legislation did not specify that a certain percentage of these funds had to be spent on older workers, as it did for other groups, such as migrants and Native Americans. The only Title III funds used specifically for older workers are those that maintain the original older workers' program, Operation Mainstream, which was transferred to CETA in 1973 after its authorization ended.

Of special interest at this time is the new CETA emphasis on middle-aged and older workers. For the first time, the 1978 amended legislation focuses directly on program development to benefit this age group under Title III. According to a report from the Secretary of Labor to the Select Committee on Aging, in fiscal year 1979, $18,600,000 were allocated from Title III of CETA; the employment related allocations were $17,922,000 to continue the phaseout of the former Commerce Department's Title X (a labor-intensive program modeled after SCSEP), and $678,000 in three other programs, including a $492,000 Green Thumb National On-The-Job Training Program.

Section 308 of CETA Title III is off to a very slow start but is strong in its language, mandating "the development and establishment. . .of programs for middle-aged and older workers, which will lead to a more equitable share of employment and training resources for middle-aged and older workers." Definite steps are set out for strengthening this objective, including research on the relationship between age and employment, and authority to pay reasonable training costs for participants in career training and retraining programs, thereby contributing to increased equity for older people.

**Advocacy Strategy**

Significant progress in establishing the rights of older Americans has been made by older people acting as their own advocates. Groups such as the Gray Panthers and the National Organization of Women's (NOW) Rights Committee, and national aging organizations including the National Caucus on the Black Aged, the National Council on Aging, and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), have fought and continue to do so for the rights and entitlements of the elderly. Indeed, these groups hold much promise for creating a more equitable society for the elderly.

### Adjustment in Personnel Policies

Personnel policies and practices of public and private employers need to be changed in order to make the best possible use of older people who continue to be a part of the work force or who wish to reenter it. According to the National Committee on Careers for Older Americans (1980), such adjustments could include:

a. flexibility in hours of work, part-time vs. full-time opportunities, job structures, and skill and performance requirements,

b. counseling regarding job requirements and career paths, and opportunities for training, development, and promotion, and

c. linkages with employment services and community educational institutions so as to enable employer needs for older workers to be well understood.

Age-based personnel policies are increasingly being scrutinized by federal officials charged with enforcement of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act. Firm policies that have adversely affected the promotional and salary prospects of older workers must now be defended in federal courts. Companies must demonstrate that these policies are based on new realities and not old myths. Failure to document the efficacy of age-based personnel systems will most likely result in fines and a judicial mandate to alter the policies. Also subject to question are any layoff procedures that systematically eliminate older workers from the payrolls. Vigorous enforcement of age discrimination guidelines should create changes in the personnel policies that will make continued employment more desirable and also create more job opportunities for older workers.

### Incorporating Aging as an Integral Component of the Educational Curriculum

If ageism is to be alleviated, if not totally eliminated in our society, then educational programs about older people and the process of aging must be vested in the existing educational system—federal, state, and local—with active participation and cooperation of specialized agencies. A unit on aging should indeed be established within the new U.S. Department of Education to initiate supportive educational services for the aging and to provide information on or about older people.

Similarly, all state departments of education should designate full-time responsibility to provide the leadership for staff in the development and implementation of programs in education for the aging. Finally, school divisions should develop curriculum units that introduce youth to aging and its implications with respect to the present and the future.

**Vocational Education Strategy**

To change the situation with respect to the participation of older Americans in vocational education, vocational educators must join other disciplines in seeking to expand the public's understanding of the abilities and needs of the elderly. Vocational educators will have to examine the realities of recruiting elderly persons, if the elderly are to be adequately served. And, of course, training for vocational educators themselves is needed if effective programs are to be designed and implemented.

These strategies, however, are dependent upon a more basic one: vocational educators must begin to examine seriously their own attitudes toward older people, and their training and placement programs' potential to serve the aged adequately. They must begin to view older people as having the ability to grow and develop, as being appropriate to include in vocational education activities, and as being desired clientele.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A review of the current training and employment situation of older persons reveals that millions of these individuals have a desire to become involved in new careers and training opportunities.

Personal, societal, institutional, and other forms of barriers that serve to limit the work options of older persons include age discrimination and the reluctance of employers to invest in training older persons. Age discrimination legislation sought to remove these barriers, and recent amendments to the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) of 1967 have raised the mandatory retirement age for most workers. Federally funded programs (e.g., MDTA, CETA, SCSEP of the Older Americans Act) have used various approaches to improve training and employment opportunities for older people.

Because of the enforcement of the age discrimination legislation, and the effective advocacy of older adults, it is possible that American society will once again affirm the economic right to earn a living and pursue a career at any age, will accept and recognize that the vast majority of older individuals are fully able to contribute to society in important ways, including the economic health of the nation, and will find the ways to accept the functional difficulties and dependencies that develop with age, so that activity and contribution can continue.

### Action Plan for Vocational Education

Vocational education at all levels could be of dramatic assistance to older people, many of whom do not wish to be idle. The opportunities that are presented to vocational education are increasingly more evident. Yet, few vocational educators have accepted the challenge and are actively responding. Others have made little or no effort to be of help. A *plan of action* is needed such as that described by the National Committee on Careers for Older Americans (1979):

1. Adopt specific objectives for helping older people to prepare for further involvement in economic, social, and cultural activities.

2. Assign a high priority for the use of institutional time, energy, and resources for the achievement of the agreed upon objectives.

3. Develop a recruiting and counseling program for older people designed to be just as intense and as personalized as recruiting and counseling for younger people.

If such an action plan is seriously adhered to by vocational educators, then the commitment to equity for older Americans should become a reality in the broad field of vocational and technical education.

**General Recommendations**

Some recommendations which may help to achieve greater equity for older Americans, as well as delineate the role for vocational education in this area, are as follows:

1. Resources must be identified in new legislation which will provide the appropriate framework for compliance activities to create equity for those having special needs in our society.

2. Vocational education should maximize training and placement opportunities for older persons by providing outreach services, support services, and accesible institutional and community-based training.

3. The president should sign an executive order instructing the various departments and agencies of the federal government to set an example for other employers by initiating programs for the recruitment and for the retention and placement of older people in full-time or part-time jobs in the federal service.

4. The U.S. Department of Labor should develop an affirmative action program for workers over the age of forty to ensure that these individuals gain access to jobs made available through federal contracts to major employers in the United States.

5. The U.S. Department of Labor should design and put into effect a national older worker program.

6. The Congress should establish a special unemployment insurance and job retraining program for middle-aged and older workers to enable them to remain in or reenter the labor force when economic pressures force them to withdraw from the labor force involuntarily.

7. An initiative should be undertaken by the Administration on Aging, in conjunction with state agencies on aging, to ensure that older individuals have real opportunities for full-time and part-time employment, as well as for volunteer service and state and area agencies on aging and with service providers funded under the Older Americans Act. These opportunities should encompass positions concerned with management, planning, and services.

8. Research should be conducted that is designed to provide the information training base for educators and counselors, and for continued research on the characteristics of older workers and the effect of these characteristics on their training and employability.

9. Further research should be conducted on the feasibility of using measures of functional capacity, rather than chronological age, as hiring, retention, and promotion criteria for older workers.

10. Further research should also be conducted concerning job structure and redesign to meet the mutual needs of the older adult and the employer.

## PERSPECTIVES FOR THE FUTURE

### Society

The aging of America will greatly influence society and government programs into the next century. This force may revolutionize education, the housing industry, economic policy, the armed forces, the federal system, and even the crime rate.

Trapped in the midst of this aging explosion are millions of trained and experienced older people representing an enormous untapped resource of workers—paid, self-employed, or volunteer. They are the victims of ageism—a human tragedy.

Providing genuine opportunities for older Americans to become involved in the economic and social life of the nation will be a difficult and complex undertaking. It will, no doubt, create some serious problems. For example, possibly there will need to be less emphasis on youth programs and public sector jobs and more emphasis on retraining and retention of older workers, thereby creating job competition between the young and old. And the expansion of the elderly population and the trend toward earlier retirement could create a retirement and medical-system funding problem in the twenty-first century.

Conversely, there are some potential positive factors which may result from the "graying of America." For example, once the bulk of the infamous "baby boom" is employed, the average age and experience of the work force as a whole will begin to rise. This may tend to increase productivity and decrease the unemployment rate. Bigger productivity gains would reduce production costs and thus help to curb inflation. Lower unemployment might ease demands for deficit spending and other efforts to boost the economy, and might create jobs, reducing a major cause of inflation.

Whether one view the future of aging positively or negatively, a very clear axiom holds true: this country cannot benefit in the long run from policies that deliberately deny any of its people the opportunity for continous growth, development, and the opportunity to perform a service. Or, in the words of The National Committee on Careers for Older Americans (1980), "America cannot benefit from policies that put on the shelf people still capable of making significant contributions to the productive capacity of the nation" (p.27).

Failure to create a climate of equity for older persons is indefensible. The consequence of not doing so is an albatross which this nation cannot afford, nor can it endure its heavy burden.

**The Challenge to Vocational Educators**

The challenge that faces vocational educators in serving the older population as a special needs group is to reorient their thinking in such a way that they acknowledge the educational needs of older people and accept the tenet that individuals of all ages have the potential for development and continued growth and the work skills to be trained or retrained for second careers.

The vocational education profession now has the opportunity to respond in a very positive way to create a climate of equity for older people. Vocational educators can develop educational activities which will ameliorate problems of older individuals but they can also institute programming for reentry of senior citizens into the world of work in the pursuit of second careers and for meaningful leisure-time activity. A significant breakthrough in adult vocational and technical education appears greater now than at any time since the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917.

## REFERENCES


Arvey, R., and Mussio, S. "Test Discrimination, Job Performance, and Age." *Industrial Gerontology* 16 (Winter, 1973).

Bauer, Dorothy. *Older Worker Manpower Programs: A Critical Appraisal.* Paper prepared for the Federal Council on the Aging, Washington, DC, 1979.

Brown, Robert J. "A Department of Labor Look at the Older Worker." *Industrial Gerontology* 4, Vol. 2 (Spring 1977): 73-76.

Butler, Robert. *Why Survive?: Being Old in America.* New York: Harper and Row, 1973.

Gappa, J. M. *Improving Equity in Postsecondary Education: New Directions for Leadership.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977.

Harris, L., et al. *The Myth and Reality of Aging in America.* Washington, DC: National Council on the Aging, 1975.

Harris, L. *1979 Study of American Attitudes Toward Pension and Retirement: A Nationwide Survey of Employees, Retirees, and Business Leaders.* New York: Johnson and Higgins, 1979.

Meier, Elizabeth L. *Aging in America: Implications for Employment.* Washington, DC: National Council on Aging, 1976.

National Committee on Careers for Older Americans. *Older Americans: An Untapped Resource.* New York: Academy for Educational Development, 1979.

National Committee on Careers for Older Americans. *Older Americans: An Untapped Resource.* National Journal Issues Book (1980).

*Older Americans Act of 1965 as Amended.* Washington, DC: Administration on Aging, March 1978.

Robinson, C. "Affirmative Action Officers: A Preliminary Study." *Emergent Leadership: Focus on Minorities and Women in Educational Administration* 3, Vol. 1 (1978): 42-44.

Robinson, C. *The Departmental Self-Study: An Organizational Equity Strategy for Higher Education.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, April 1980.

Pursell, Donald E., and Torrence, William D. "The Older Woman and Her Search for Employment." *Aging and Work* 3, Vol. 2 (1980): 17-28.

Schram, Sanford F., and Osten, David F. "CETA and the Aging." *Aging and Work* 1, Vol. 3 (1978): 163-174.

Scott, Patricia Reed. "Staffing an Agency with Older People." In *Older Persons: Unused Resources for Unmet Needs.* Sage Contemporary Social Science Issues 40. Edited by Frank Riessman. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1977.

Shilkoff, Marilyn Leader. "Older Worker Experience and Job Satisfaction". Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, Teachers College, 1979. Available from University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Order No. 80068556.

U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. *Employment-Related Problems of Older Workers: A Research Strategy.* R&D Monograph 73. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979. Stock No. 029-000-00386-6.

Wallworth, John. "New Adventures for Seniors in World of Work." *Worklife,* 4, Vol. 2 (1979): 13-16.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Before vocational educators can adequately meet the special needs of special groups, they must be committed to a philosophy of equitable education. The issue of equity in education has received a great deal of attention over the last ten years from the legislative, judicial, and academic sectors. As a result of this attention, research and analysis have shown that the term "equity" has a different connotation for nearly everyone who has attempted to define and apply it to educational programs. In addition, a host of related terms such as equality, disparity, and discrimination are a part of the vocational educator's daily vocabulary.

In an attempt to help vocational educators to articulate a definition of equity, the National Center for Research in Vocational Education has commissioned seventeen papers on equity from three broad perspectives—academic, vocational, and special needs. The authors in each of the three groups provide their own perceptions of and experiences with equity in education to bring vocational educators to a better understanding of this complex but timely issue.

The National Center is indebted to these seventeen authors for their contribution to furthering research on equity in vocational education.

We are also indebted to Dr. Judith Gappa, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs at San Francisco State University for reviewing and synthesizing all seventeen papers. Special thanks also go to Cindy Silvani-Lacey, program associate, for coordinating the papers and to Regina Castle and Beverly Haynes who spent many hours typing manuscripts.

Robert E. Taylor
Executive Director

## FUNDING INFORMATION

**Project Title:**
National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Applied Research and Development Function

**Contract Number:**
300780032

**Project Number:**
051MH10012

**Educational Act Under Which the Funds Were Administered:**
Education Amendments of 1976, P.L. 94-482

**Source of Contract:**
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Vocational and Adult Education
Washington, D.C.

**Contractor:**
The National Center for Research
in Vocational Education
The Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio 43210

**Executive Director:**
Robert E. Taylor



**Disclaimer:**
This publication was prepared pursuant to a contract with the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education. Contractors undertaking such projects under Government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgment in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official U.S. Department of Education position or policy.

**Discrimination Prohibited:**
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states "No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Public Law 92-318 states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Therefore, the National Center for Research in Vocational Education Project, like every program or activity receiving financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education must be operated in compliance with these laws.

## THE NATIONAL CENTER MISSION STATEMENT

The National Center for Research in Vocational Education's mission is to increase the ability of diverse agencies, institutions, and organizations to solve educational problems relating to individual career planning, preparation, and progression. The National Center fulfills its mission by:

- Generating knowledge through research
- Developing educational programs and products
- Evaluating individual program needs and outcomes
- Providing information for national planning and policy
- Installing educational programs and products
- Operating information systems and services
- Conducting leadership development and training programs

Robert E. Taylor
Executive Director

OSU

The Ohio State University

## ORDERING INFORMATION

When ordering, please use order number and title. Orders of $10 or less should be prepaid. Make remittance payable to the National Center for Research in Vocational Education. Mail order to:

The National Center for Research
in Vocational Education
National Center Publications, Box F
1960 Kenny Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210

Prices listed are in effect at the time of publication of this book. All prices include postage and handling. Prices are subject to change without notice.

### QUANTITY DISCOUNTS

Orders of five (5) or more items, as listed by publication order number and title, with a total dollar value for the order of:

$ 50 to $100, the discount is 5%
$101 to $200, the discount is 10%
$201 to $300, the discount is 15%
$301 to $400, the discount is 20%
$401 and above, the discount is 25%

### INTERNATIONAL ORDERS

All orders, in any amount, from outside the United States and its possessions are to be paid in U.S. currency. Additional postage and handling charges may be added for foreign shipments, if necessary.

---

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| "PERSPECTIVES ON EQUITY" (17 papers) | | |
| Complete set of 17 papers | $30.00 | RD 214 |
| Individual papers | $ 2.35 each | RD 214A-Q |
| *Equity from a Vocational District Director's Perspective,* by Richard Adams | | RD 214 A |
| *Equity from an Economic Perspective,* by Gilbert Cardenas | | RD 214 B |
| *Equity from a Public Administration Perspective,* by Yearn H. Choi | | RD 214 C |
| *Equity from a Bilingual Education Perspective,* by JoAnn Crandall | | RD 214 D |
| *Equity from a Vocational Education Research Perspective,* by Nancy Carol Eliason | | RD 214 E |
| *Equity from a Sex Fairness Perspective,* by Nancy Smith Evans | | RD 214 F |
| *Equity from a State Administrator's Perspective,* by Geneva Fletcher | | RD 214 G |
| *Equity from a Special Education Perspective,* by Marc Hull | | RD 214 H |
| *Equity from a Business, Industry, and Labor Perspective,* by Irving Kovarsky | | RD 214 I |
| *Equity from a Racial/Ethnic Perspective,* by Samuel D. Proctor | | RD 214 J |
| *Equity from a Legal Perspective,* by Lisa Richette | | RD 214 K |
| *Equity from a Sociological Perspective,* by Jerome Salomone | | RD 214 L |
| *Equity from an Anthropological Perspective,* by Henrietta Schwartz | | RD 214 M |
| *Equity for the Disadvantaged: From a School Board Member's Perspective,* by Carol Schwartz | | RD 214 N |
| *Equity from an Aging Specialist's Perspective,* by N. Alan Sheppard | | RD 214 O |
| *Equity from a Large City Director's Perspective,* by Lucille Campbell Thrane | | RD 214 P |
| *Equity from a Vocational Teacher Educator's Perspective,* by Clyde Welter | | RD 214 Q |
| Also Available: | | |
| *Equity in Vocational Education: A Futures Agenda.* Selected Presentations from the Equity Colloquium Conference held at the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, February, 1981. | | RD 213 $5.50 |



32